

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 PC-01 EB-07 COME-00

AGR-05 OMB-01 /058 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9689

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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AMCONSUL BOMBAY PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRUORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MADRAS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8933

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: ANALYSIS OF EMERGENCY: END OF THE FIRST WEEK

SUMMARY: OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD, MRS GANDHI WILL BE PRIMARILY
INTERESTED IN CONSOLIDATING HER POWER AND DEMONSTRATING PROGRESS
IN ECONOMIC REFORMS AND GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION. THE SUPREME
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COURT VERDICT ON HER CASE, THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION

AND THE STATE OF INTRA-CONGRESS DISSIDENCE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO HER DECISIONS ON WHETHER AND WHEN TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS, TO RELEASE DETAINED OPPOSITION LEADERS AND TO HOLD ELECTIONS AS SCHEDULED. GIVEN THE POLITICAL RISKS INVOLVED IN RETURNING TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE, SHE WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE TO CONTINUE THE "INTERNAL" EMERGENCY, EVEN IF RESTRICTIONS ARE RELAXED SOMEWHAT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW AUTHORITARIAN CONTEXT CARRIES BOTH DISADVANTAGES AS WELL AS ADVANTAGES. THROUGH HER RESTRICTIONS, SHE MAY CAP THE IMPORTANT SAFETY VALVES THAT DEMOCRACY PROVIDED TO PLURALISTIC INDIA, POTENTIALLY HEIGHTENING RATHER THAN SUPPRESSING REGIONAL SEPARATISM. SHE MAY FIND IT INCREASINGLY NECESSARY TO APPOINT TRUSTED COLLEAGUES OR RELATIVES TO KEY POWER SLOTS, GRADUALLY DISSIPATING THE CONSENSUS APPROACH NEHRU STARTED IN THE 1950'S. AND ISOLATING IMPORTANT OPINION CENTERS. THERE ARE ALREADY SIGNS THT HER ECONOMIC AND BUREAUCRATIC REFORMS MAY FACE THOUGH SLEDDING. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT MRS GANDHI IS FEELING HER WAY AS SHE GOES, AND KEEPING HER BROADER OPTIONS OPEN AS SHE NOVE FROM DECISION TO DECISION. OVER THE WEEKS AHEAD, WE WILL BE CAUTIOUS IN JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT LONG RANGE IMPLICATIONS OF SHORE RANGE ACTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD, MRS GANDHI WILL BE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN CONSOLIDATING HER POWER AND DEOMNSTRATING PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC REFORMS AND GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION. SHE IS STILL INTENT ON INSULATING HERSELF FROM THE FORCES DESCRIBED IN PARA 5 REFTTEL THAT CARRIED THE POTENTIAL TO SHAKE HER HOLD ON INDIAN POLITICS. POSSIBLE DECISIONS TO RELAX THE LID ON POLITICAL AND PRESS FREEDOMS, RELEASING OPPOSITION LEADERS, OR ALLOWING NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED WILL PROBABLY DEPEND ON SEVERAL FACTORS: (A) THE SUPREME COURT VERDICT. THIS COULD STILL GO AGAINST MRS GANDHI. IF IT DOES, THE ELECTION COMMISSIONER COULD EXONERATE HER, OR SHE COULD USE HER MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT TO LEGISLATE AWAY THE SIX-YEAR DISQUALIFICATION PENALTY. IN EITHER EVENT, THERE IS WIDE AGREEMENT SHE WILL NOT PERMIT HERSELF TO BE REMOVED FROM POWER. (B) THE LAW AND ORDER SITUATION. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THIS WILL NOT POSE MUCH OF A PROBLEM OVER THE UPCOMING MONTHS. CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS SITUATION COULD CHANGE, HOWEVER, IF HER POLITICAL OPPONENTS MANAGE TO ORGANIZE AND OPERAATE SURREPITIIOUSLY. SOME TURMOIL COULD FOLLOW IF MORARJI DESAI OR J.P. NARAYAN DIE FROM A FAST, OR IF STUDENTS BEGIN DEMONSTRATING WHEN COLLEGES REOPEN LATER THIS MONTH. A LURKING DANGER IS THAT THE SUPREME COURT ON APPEAL MAY RULE THAT SOME OF THE EMERGENCY MEASURES INITIATED ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL. (C) INTRA-CONGRESS DISSIDENCE. THE PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

SUPPRESSED DISSIDENTS. FROM ALL REPORTS, RAM IS LYING LOW--
AND HAS LOST CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE AS A RESULT OF HIS TRIMMING--
AND NO CONGRESS LEADER IS PREPARED TO BRAVE THE EXTRA-ORDINARY
POWERS NOW IN MRS GANDHI'S HANDS IN A HOPELESS BID TO
MOBILIZE THE PARTY AGAINST YVR.

2. MRS GANDHI'S PROBABLE CONCERN ABOUT HER INFLUENCE AND
PRESTIGE, WHICH WERE WANING BEFORE JUNE 26, WILL ACT, HOWEVER,
AS A PRESSURE TO CONTINUE THE "INTERNAL" EMERGENCY. THIS
WOULD BE TRUE EVEN IF BARS ON PRESS AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS
WERE TO BE RELAXED, OPPOSITION LEADERS RELEASED, OR ELECTIONS
HELD. THE RETAINED EXTRA-ORDINARY POWERS CAN BE USED TO
CONTAIN OPPOSITION OR CRITICISM, TO BACK UP AGREED "GROUND
RULES" IN THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION, AND INTIMIDATE PEOPLE
OR GROUPS WHICH CARRY INFLUENCE IN INDIAN PUBLIC LIFE,
WHETHER THEY BE IN BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, (INC-
LUDING CONGRESS), OR ELSEWHERE.

3. WE ANTICIPATE THAT MRS GANDHI WILL, THEREFORE, PROCEED
CAREFULLY AND PRAGMATICALLY IN THE POLITICAL AS WELL AS THE
ECONOMIC AREA. (WE HAVE NOTED IN NEW DELHI 8831 THAT NONE
OF THE REFORMS IN HER ANNOUNCED ECONOMIC PACKAGE HIT AT THE
POCKETBOOK OF THE FARMERS LOBBY THAT UNDERPINS CONGRESS
SUPPORT IN EVERY STATE. IT DOES NOT CALL FOR AN AGRICULTURAL
INCOME TAX OR NATIONALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES.) SHE WILL
ATTEMPT TO ILLUSTRATE EARLY THAT THE NEW SYSTEM CAN DELIVER
WHERE THE OLD "SOFT" STATE COULD NOT IN FIGHTING INFLATION,
IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND EFFICIENCY, INCREASING
AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION; AND IMPROVING LAW
AND ORDER.

4. MRS GANDHI'S "INTERNAL" EMERGENCY CARRIES WITH IT
SIGNIFICANT DISADVANTAGES AS WELL AS ADVANTAGES. HER NEW
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POWERS WILL PROBABLY PERMIT HER TO MAKE SOME GAINS ON THE
ECONOMIC FRONT, PARTICULARLY IF THE MONSOONS ARE GOOD.
THE ARREST OF OPPOSITION LEADERS AND PARTY WORKERS AND HER
MOST VOCAL CRITICS IN CONGRESS, AND CENSORSHIP WILL MINIMIZE
ACTIVE RESISTANCE TO HER MOVES. THE RAPID GROWTH IN THE
PARA-MILITARY AND INTELLIGENCE UNITS IN RECENT YEARS, AND
THE APPOINTMENT OF PEOPLE PERSONALLY LOYAL TO HER TO HEAD
THEM (SEE A-475 DECEMBER 20, 1974 "AUTHORITARIAN
DRIFT IN INDIA"), PRESENTS HER WITH FORMIDABLE ASSETS TO
CRUSH DISSENT. THE ARMY, HEADED BY A GOOD PROFESSIONAL
SOLDIER WHO IS ALSO A FELLOW KASHMIRI BRAHMIN, WILL BE
HAPPY TO REMAIN OUT OF "POLITICS." THE CULTURAL PASSIVITY
OF THE INDIAN MASSES, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC, LINGUISTIC, AND
ETHNIC COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF INDIA WILL ALSO WORK TO
LIMIT DISSENT.

5. MRS GANDHI'S NEW CONTEXT OF AUTHORITARIANISM PROVIDES

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 AGR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9690

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8933

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

A SET OF PROBLEMS THAT ARE LIKELY TO HAVE MORE OF A LONG
THAN SHORT RUN EFFECT. THE LOSS OF PERSONAL IMAGE AND
PRESTIGE SHE HAS SUFFERED BY CLINGING TO POWER COULD BE EXACER-
BATED, AT LEAST IN SOME AREAS OF INDIA, SHOULD J.P. NARAYAN
(WHO HAS AN UNASSAILABLE MORAL IMAGE IN INDIAN PUBLIC LIFE)

OR MORARJI DESAI DIE OF A FAST. IN TIGHTENING HER CHAIN OF
COMMAND AND CRUSHING OPPOSITION, MRS GANDHI MAY CAP THE
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IMPORTANT POLITICAL SAFETY VALVES THAT DEMOCRACY PROVIDED TO
PLURALISTIC INDIA, POTENTIALLY HEIGHTENING RATHER THAN
SUPPRESSING REGIONAL SEPARATISM. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, SHE
HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO RELY ON CLOSE AND TRUSTED BUT INEXPERI-
ENCED ADVISORS WITHOUT GENUINE POPULAR BASES. SHE MAY FIND
IT INCREASINGLY NECESSARY TO APPOINT TRUSTED COLLEAGUES
OR RELATIVES TO KEY POWER SLOTS, GRADUALLY DISSIPATING THE
CONSENSUS APPROACH NEHRU STARTED AND NURTURED IN THE 1950'S.
THIS IN TURN COULD LEAD TO THE SLOW ISOLATION OF THE PRIME
MINISTER FROM IMPORTANT OPINION CENTERS, HEIGHTEN RESENTMENT
AGAINST HER AND ESPECIALLY THOSE AROUND HER, AND STRENGTHEN
THE BATTLE LINES BETWEEN GROUPS ATTEMPTING TO ADVISE HER. MRS
GANDHI WILL BE FACING THE SAME OLD SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS SHE FACED BEFORE THE EMERGENCY. AND, ALTHOUGH
IN THE SHORT VIEW, ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVITY IN BUREAUCRATIC
INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT MAY IMPROVE AND BE INVIGORATED, IN
THE LONGER RUN THE EMERGENCY MAY STULTIFY INITIATIVE AND
ACTIVITY, PRODUCING NEW FORMS OF PETTY CORRUPTION AND HIGH-
HANDEDNESS. WE HEAR FROM SOME AROUND HER THAT THERE IS GROWING
CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOME OF THESE ADVERSE POSSIBILITIES AND THAT
SOME MINISTERS AND BUREAUCRATS ARE WORKING ENERGETICALLY TO
DEVELOP WAYS OF DEALING WITH AND AVERTING THEM.

6. MRS GANDHI WILL HAVE THESE PROBLEMS IN MIND AS SHE CHARTS
HER AS YET UNDECIDED COURSE OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL
MONTHS. OUR IMPRESSION AT THIS POINT, IS THAT SHE IS ATTEMPT-
ING TO KEEP HER OPTIONS OPEN AND MOVE FROM DECISION TO DECISION,
WEEK BY WEEK. SHE WILL PROBABLY AVOID ASSOCIATING HERSELF
WITH ADVOCATES OF ANY SPECIFIC LINE OF ARGUMENT. THIS
MAY PRODUCE CONTRADICTIONS AND ZIG-ZAGS IN HER DECISION
MAKING IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS AHEAD, AND WE WILL BE CAUTIOUS
IN JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT LONG-RANGE IMPLICATIONS OF
SHORT RANGE ACTIONS. ON THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF WHETHER MRS
GANDHI WILL RETURN TO TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC FORMS, WE SUSPECT
THE PROBLEM INCREASINGLY WORRYING INDIAN POLITICIANS WHO
WISH TO THINK THE BEST OF THE PM EVEN NOW IS PRECISELY HOW
SHE CAN GET OFF THE TIGER EVEN IF SHE WISHES TO.
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